

THE ONE intriguing facet of cup-tie football which never fails to capture the supporters' imagination, is that degree of uncertainty.

When referee Mr. P. Bradbury signalled the end of this Berks and Bucks Senior Cup quarter-final, Wokingham's 700 fans danced deliriously. Their modest Athenian League Division I side had just dismissed the giants from across the border — cup holders Wycombe Wanderers. No doubt many of Wokingham's loyal citizens had prayed for such a result which now becomes a glorious memory to cherish.

And how richly Wokingham deserve the prize of a semi-final place. Their effort and application was of the highest quality as they fought tigerishly to knock their illustrious opponents out of their usual flowing rhythm.

Perhaps the word application sums up the main difference in character between the two teams. Wanderers gave the appearance of a surgeon just about to perform his 1,000th appendicitis operation, with a "I've seen it all before" attitude.

Wokingham had been preparing seriously for this test with an extra night's training. They matched Wanderers for skill, intelligence, stamina and left

them miles behind with their bubbling enthusiasm.

Captain Peter Roystone, a former Wanderers' favourite, played a major part in plotting the downfall of his old colleagues, rising majestically to cut out any hint of danger in the air.

But, Wokingham's real source of danger came from outside-right Ray Brill (formerly on Reading's books) making his home debut. This stocky winger caused havoc with his crossfield runs and close ball control. Throughout the afternoon Wanderers were unable to contain him as he roamed unhindered.

At times, Wycombe's work-rate up front resembled a family out on a Sunday afternoon stroll. There was no cohesion or understanding with the forward line, as a whole, looking decidedly lazy.

The firm surface was, of course, a direct contrast to the ground conditions Wanderers' players experienced four days previously, when they defeated Southall at Loakes Park.

Nevertheless, this cannot be an adequate excuse for this shock defeat. As is his custom, Temel worked industriously down the right-wing. While Samuels tried equally as hard to get the front line functioning as a unit.

Wycombe's first real attack materialised soon after. From a Gale free-kick Faulkner saw his diving header cleared to Merrick, who's shot rebounded to Baker only for the inside-right to squeeze a fierce first-time drive the wrong side of Binfield's goal.

Temel was being allowed space by the Wokingham defence with almost reckless abandon. They nearly paid a high price for their casualness as he flashed a scorching 30-yard drive inches over the crossbar.

At last Wycombe strung together a combined move

Wycombe pay high price for their lack of application

By **PATRICK VERCOE**

Wokingham T. 1, Wycombe W. 0

which visibly worried the home defence. Baker and Worley worked an opening for Samuels but Binfield showed quick anticipation by charging out of his goal to smother the chance.

At the other end centre-forward Kelman streaked through the Wanderers defence, hotly pursued by Lailey, but Maskell had moved off his line to narrow the angle intelligently and was able to parry Kelman's first shot before the ex-Slough Town player lofted the rebound wide.

Just a minute from the interval Wokingham scored a goal which was disallowed for offside. This was certainly a lucky break for Wanderers and a decision which greatly angered the crowd. From a Lowe free-kick the ball was only partially cleared to Goodenough, who shot through a ruck of players and past Maskell's right hand. The linesman amazingly raised his flag to signal offside although a Wycombe defender was standing on his own goal-line.

Gift equaliser

Wokingham 'keeper Binfield, who often gave the impression of not being too sure with his handling, nearly gave Wycombe a gift equaliser when he fumbled the ball outside the area and was forced to concede a free-kick as Faulkner harassed him.

As a thunderstorm broke over Wokingham's neat and compact ground sending the spectators rushing for shelter, Wycombe nearly put themselves on equal status. Samuels' vicious curling cross brought a spectacular diving header from Merrick, which was just off target.

In the 63rd minute justice was seen to be done bearing in mind Wokingham's cancelled goal. It was, however, a tragedy for Wanderers that such a simple raid should produce the deciding margin.

Brill hit a high and hopeful pass deep into the Wycombe territory far too strong for Eon Harper to reach. But, Rundle was unable to get up with his usual sense of purpose and the ball screwed off the side of his head. Harper, who had never stopped running from the minute the move was created, reached the ball a fraction before Maskell to become the toast of Wokingham.

With Roystone now interpreting messages from the

line, Wokingham were instructed to sit on their lead and consolidate. Centre-forward Kelman came out of the forward line to help block the middle allowing less room for Baker to manipulate openings.

The game now became a battle of touchline tactics. In the 72nd minute Wycombe made a tactical change by pulling off Faulkner, which to me was a slightly harsh decision as he was playing no worse than any other of his colleagues, allowing Busby to display his skills.

MATCH DETAILS

Wokingham Town: A. Binfield; G. Thomas, J. Ford; C. Goodenough, P. Roystone, M. Scott; R. Brill, E. Harper, J. Kelman, R. Harper, D. Lowe. Sub.: P. Carter.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; L. Temel, C. Gale; J. Lailey, I. Rundle, D. Thomas; L. Worley, B. Baker, K. Samuels, V. Faulkner, L. Merrick. Sub.: V. Busby.

Half-time 0-0. Scorers: Eon Harper.

Free-kicks (conceded) Wokingham 15, Wycombe 6.

Corners — Wokingham 3, Wycombe 6.